

March 22, 2019,

RE: Letter in support of SB 1085 and suggested amendments

Dear Committee Members,

On behalf of The ScottsMiracle-Gro Company and our subsidiary The Hawthorne Gardening Company we urge you to create a legal marketplace for the responsible production, distribution and consumption of cannabis. Outdated drug laws continue to impact the lives of millions of Americans arrested for minor drug possession crimes, which result in lifelong harm. This proposed legislation would allow Connecticut to tax and regulate the adult use of marijuana and spur economic benefits to many in the state.

The ScottsMiracle-Gro Company is the quintessential American business. Established in 1868 in Marysville, Ohio the ScottsMiracle-Gro name is synonymous with America's love for lawns and gardens. Connecticut has been a home to one of our manufacturing facilities, for many years allowing us to create one of the largest green waste recycling facilities supplying the Northeast with mulch, soils, and other products used in gardening. The Hawthorne Gardening Company is the leading provider of nutrients, plant supplements, growing media, air filtration and lighting used for hydroponic and indoor growing. Hawthorne also distributes hundreds of other products used in the indoor cultivation of plants to retail stores throughout the state.

We have had an opportunity to learn from the successes and failures of other states that have implemented adult and medical programs and while we support the legislation we ask the committees to consider several improvements to the legislation.

**Permit limited cultivation for personal use**

Connecticut should also allow for limited personal cultivation to ensure access to affordable, safe, and effective cannabis. Programs have been implemented in most states that mimic home brewing laws resulting in a cap on personal production. A study by Leafly compared the cost of growing at home versus purchasing at a dispensary and approximated that one gram of cannabis can be ~75% cheaper to grow at home (\$3.90 vs \$15). For a low income patient or an adult consumer this could be the difference from participating in a legal or illegal market place.

Personal cultivation becomes even more essential as a legal access point if the state permits local control, which has led to bans or overly restrictive zoning rules in other states that limit market access. These policies create large distances between consumers and dispensaries and present many consumers no legal access points. Without personal cultivation these consumers are left only with the black market as their access point.

Legalization cannot effectively fight the black market without both commercialization and personal cultivation as consumer options.

Finally, many personal growers who are consumers and patients prefer to control the inputs used on their plants. Personal cultivation facilitates safe production of plants so that the grower can decide what products they use in cultivation and production allowing them to avoid additives they do not want their bodies exposed to. For patients personal cultivation also permits the patient to grow plants that best treats their conditions while also providing access to patients that may have a debilitating condition that prevents travel.

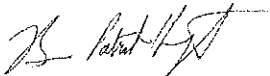
### **Limit Local Government Control**

Overly-restrictive local bans and zoning rules have been used to limit market access and inflate costs, which drives consumers to the illegal market and undermines the state-regulated system. This is why we believe states should ensure local governments allow state-licensed cannabis businesses and personal cultivation to operate in their jurisdictions. States should adopt measures that allow local governments to address legitimate public health and public safety issues while ensuring the illegal sales are not perpetuated in place of state authorized activities.

### **Conclusion**

We applaud the committee for taking the time to learn more about this issue and how Connecticut can install major criminal justice reform while creating a new economy. As an American company with over 150 years of business experience, we have many unique insights about this emerging industry and would be happy to share those perspectives as the Committee continues consider this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian Herrington".

Brian Herrington  
Director of Government Affairs  
Hawthorne Gardening Company